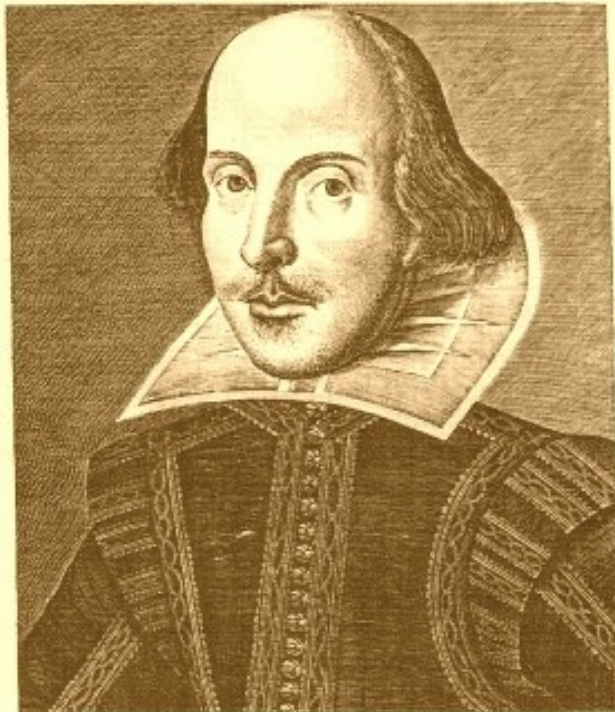


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to Modern English - for contemporary  
readers and performers

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# Shakespeare For White Trash: Richard II

*Classic literature translated into Modern English by Crad Kilodney*

## **October 7, 2010 – Author’s Note:**

*“Shakespeare For White Trash” is a series of condensed rewrites designed to make Shakespeare understandable and enjoyable to those who have little or no knowledge of him. The plots and characters are unchanged, but everything else has been radically restyled. Read my versions and you’ll be a Shakespeare fan forever!*

*These plays are intended to be performed, as well as read.*

## **Main Characters**

King Richard II

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster — Richard’s uncle

Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford (later Henry IV) — son of John of Gaunt, and Richard’s first cousin (The name Bolingbroke comes from the castle he was born in.)

Queen to King Richard (In some texts she is unnamed, and in others she is named Isabel. She is actually a fictional composite of Richard’s two wives, Anne and Isabella.)

Two Waiting-ladies to the Queen

Duke of York (Edmund of Langley) — brother of John and uncle to Richard

Duchess of York (York’s wife)

Duke of Aumerle (Earl of Rutland) — York’s son and first cousin to Richard

Duchess of Gloucester (Eleanor of Bohun) — widow of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, another uncle of Richard’s

York’s Servant

Bushy, Bagot, and Green — friends of Richard

Earl of Salisbury — supporter of Richard

Bishop of Carlisle — supporter of Richard

Sir Stephen Scroop — supporter of Richard

Lord Berkeley — supporter of Richard

Abbot of Westminster — supporter of Richard

Welsh Captain — supporter of Richard

Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk

Duke of Surrey

Lord Marshal

Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland — supporter of Bolingbroke

Harry Percy — son of Henry Percy (In other texts he is given the nickname Hotspur.)

Lords Ross and Willoughby — supporters of Bolingbroke

Lord Fitzwater

Gardener

Gardener's Helper

Groom

Keeper of the prison at Pomfret Castle

Sir Pierce (of) Exton

Exton's Servant

Death (This silent figure does not appear in the original.)

**Gist of the story:** A little historical background will help. Richard II was the last King of the House of Plantagenet. He was the son of Edward, the “Black Prince”, who was the eldest son of King Edward III. Prince Edward died before King Edward, however, so Richard inherited the throne directly from his grandfather at the age of ten. That was in 1377. In the early years of his reign, he was greatly influenced by his uncle, John of Gaunt, but that relationship cooled off later. Shakespeare starts the story around the beginning of 1398, roughly two years before Richard's death. Richard is in his prime, and his uncles are old. Richard's cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, has accused Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, of having caused the death of Henry's uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. (Shakespeare's story line suggests that Mowbray was involved in some way, but it was Richard who ordered Gloucester killed.) The antagonists are ready to duel it out to settle the matter, but Richard stops the duel and exiles both of them. When John of Gaunt dies, Richard seizes his property to help pay for a war against rebels in Ireland. When he leaves the country, Bolingbroke returns with an army

to regain control of his late father's estate. More than that, however, he takes advantage of Richard's unpopularity to overthrow him. He becomes King Henry IV. Richard is imprisoned in Pomfret Castle. He is assassinated by Sir Pierce of Exton, who believes he is acting on King Henry's wishes. But when Richard's body is presented to King Henry, he disclaims responsibility and sends Exton away. Out of guilt, King Henry declares he will go on a Crusade to the Holy Lands. The epilogue by Richard's ghost does not appear in the original. It's my invention.

(This is the first modernized version of *Richard II* ever published. *Richard II* is important in that it marks the end of the House of Plantagenet and the beginning of the House of Lancaster, which includes Henry IV, V, and VI. It's not a widely-read or performed play, however. The one difficulty for the audience or reader is that there's no hero to root for. We like John of Gaunt, but he dies early in the play. We sympathize with Bolingbroke at first because his lands have been confiscated, but later on we see him as just another power-grabber. We dislike Richard initially, but by the Fourth Act we are feeling sorry for him. Shakespeare really treats him quite gently considering the historical facts. Shakespeare scholars regard Richard as a poet. All his poetic speeches in the original play are scrapped in this version, but in my ending he delivers a poetic epilogue as a ghost. Throughout Shakespeare's histories we find people at war with each other and killing each other over control of the throne, and the principal figures were all related to each other! Henry IV was Richard II's first cousin. The Wars of the Roses were fought between the Lancasters and the Yorks, who were cousins. The well-defined rules of succession in the English Monarchy didn't prevent any of this bloodshed. As long as the King had real power, the throne was worth fighting for. What this proves is that all history is about power and nothing else. Keep that in mind as you read Shakespeare's other histories.)

**Act 1, Scene 1.** *Windsor Castle. King Richard comes in with John of Gaunt and other Nobles and Attendants, including the Lord Marshal.*

*Richard:* So—my venerable uncle John of Gaunt. Your son Henry has some sort of accusation against Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

*Gaunt:* Yes, my lord.

*Richard:* Is this a legitimate accusation, or does he just hate the guy for personal reasons?

*Gaunt:* No, he's quite sincere. He feels it's something you ought to know about.

*Richard:* Are they both here?

*Gaunt:* Yes.

*Richard (Reluctantly):* All right. Better bring them in.

*(Gaunt leaves and comes back with Thomas Mowbray and Henry Bolingbroke.)*

*Bolingbroke:* Long life to you and every day a happy one, my lord!

*Richard:* Thank you, cousin.

*Mowbray:* May every day be better than the one before, my lord!

*Richard:* Thank you, Mowbray.—Cousin, what is this accusation all about?

*Bolingbroke:* First thing, my lord, I want you to understand that I come here as a loyal and loving subject, thinking only of your well-being. And the second thing, I want you to hear me say this. *(Turning to Mowbray)* Mowbray, you are a traitor and a criminal, and I am prepared to back my words with my sword. *(Places hand on hilt of sword)*

*Mowbray (To Richard):* My lord, I'm going to make a supreme effort to control my anger, out of respect for you. After all, Bolingbroke is your cousin. However, I must say that he is a dirty, despicable liar, and I will gladly defend my honour on his terms, any time, anywhere. *(Places hand on hilt of sword)*

*Bolingbroke:* It doesn't matter that I'm the King's cousin. *(He throws his glove at Mowbray's feet.)* If you have any guts, pick it up.

*(Mowbray picks it up.)*

*Mowbray:* I accept your challenge. And if I am what you say I am, let God take my life. Otherwise, let him take yours.

*Richard:* I'm still waiting to hear what this is all about.

*Bolingbroke:* Mowbray took eight thousand nobles in coin, supposedly for your soldiers, and he spent it on himself. That's for starters. Furthermore, all the treasonous plots that have been brewing for the past eighteen years are his doing. And finally—he killed the Duke of Gloucester—our uncle Thomas of Woodstock. *(Richard reacts nervously to the mention of Gloucester's name, and he and Mowbray exchange a guilty look.)* And for that he's going to pay.

*Mowbray:* Lies! Lies! Lies! My lord, this man pours poison and filth into your ears.

*Richard:* I'm not taking sides here, even though he's my cousin. You have your chance to speak, and you can speak freely.

*Mowbray:* Then I will. *(To Bolingbroke)* Bolingbroke, you are full of shit. As far as the money goes, I disbursed three quarters of it properly to the soldiers, and the rest was money owed to me for past expenses, which the King knew about and agreed to. As for Gloucester, I didn't kill him. *(Hesitates)* I feel bad about him. If I was remiss in any way—and perhaps I was—that's a matter for my own conscience and nothing to do with you. *(To Gaunt)* And to the Duke of Lancaster, I admitted to you already that on one occasion I plotted against you—which I sincerely regret—and I apologized to you.—But as for these ugly accusations—*(Turning to Bolingbroke)* they are the ravings of a degenerate. They are malicious and contemptible—*(Throws his glove at Bolingbroke's feet)* and I will defend my honour.

*(Bolingbroke picks up the glove.)*

*Richard:* Please, gentlemen. You are much too angry. I don't want this to lead to a trial by combat. *(To Gaunt)* Neither do you, I hope.

*Gaunt:* No, I don't. *(To Bolingbroke)* Son, drop his glove.

*Richard:* Mowbray?

*Mowbray:* Don't ask me to, my lord. This is a matter of honour. I've been slandered, and I can't let it pass.

*Richard:* Come now, Mowbray. I'm your King. Give me his glove.

*Mowbray:* You might as well ask for my life. Honour is everything to a gentleman.

*Richard (To Bolingbroke):* You first, then, Henry. Come on.

*Bolingbroke:* No, my lord. I'm not going to disgrace myself.

*[Author's note: In some editions, such as Signet Classic, Gaunt leaves at this point; in others, such as Folger Library, he stays. I'm following Folger on this and leaving Gaunt onstage.]*

*Richard:* Well—since you both insist on fighting it out—I'll let you settle it on Saint Lambert's day, September seventeenth. *(To the Lord Marshal)* Lord Marshal, I leave it to you to make the arrangements.

*(They all leave.)*

**Act 1, Scene 2.** *Gaunt's house in London. John of Gaunt comes in with his sister-in-law, the Duchess of Gloucester.*

*Gaunt:* Eleanor, don't you think I'd like to see your husband's death avenged? Gloucester was my brother. But there's nothing we can do. We can only have patience and leave it to God to punish his murderer.

*Duchess:* Is that all you can say? His blood was your blood—the blood of King Edward. When my dear Gloucester died, part of you died, too. Don't you see? You must take revenge.

*Gaunt:* No. It's not in my nature. I'm not going to get revenge on the King. The King is God's agent on earth.

*Duchess:* Richard? Richard killed Gloucester?

*Gaunt:* I'm sure he gave the orders.

*Duchess:* What about Mowbray?

*Gaunt:* He may have been involved. I don't know.

*Duchess:* Where do I go with my grievance, then? Who will listen?

*Gaunt:* Only God.

*Duchess:* So—you're going to Coventry to see your son duel Mowbray?

*Gaunt:* Yes.

*Duchess:* All good luck to the Duke of Hereford. May he kill Mowbray.—Goodbye, Gaunt.

*Gaunt:* Goodbye, sister.

*Duchess:* Give my greetings to your brother Edmund. Tell him—oh, what?—To come and visit me? What's the use? Why bother to visit a widow who grieves day and night in an empty house? It's not home any more.—It's just a place for me to die.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 1, Scene 3.** *Coventry. The Lord Marshal and the Duke of Aumerle come in on the field of combat.*

*Marshal:* Are both the combatants armed and ready, Lord Aumerle?

*Aumerle:* Yes, they're ready to fight. We're just waiting for the King.

*(Trumpets. The King comes in with Gaunt, Bushy, Bagot, and Green. Then Mowbray comes in.)*

*Richard:* Marshal, do the formalities.

*Marshal (To Mowbray):* Before God and the King, state your name and explain the reason why you are here to do combat.

*Mowbray:* My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. I am here to defend my honour against Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, a false accuser. I fight with truth on my side and place my trust in God to grant me victory.

*(A trumpet. Bolingbroke comes in.)*

*Richard (To the Marshal):* Go ahead.

*Marshal (To Bolingbroke):* Before God and the King, state your name and explain the reason why you are here to do combat.

*Bolingbroke:* I am Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford and Earl of Derby. I come to accuse Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, that he is a traitor to God and the King. May God protect me to the same degree that I speak the truth.

*Marshal:* All spectators shall keep well away from the combat and not interfere.

*Bolingbroke:* Let me take my leave of the King now in case I should die.

*(He kneels before the King and kisses his hand.)*

*Richard:* Good luck, cousin. Let him whose cause is right prevail.

*Bolingbroke:* Sir, you give me courage.

*Gaunt:* You are the stronger. You'll win.

*(Mowbray kneels before the King and kisses his hand.)*

*Mowbray:* No gentleman in all of England is happier than I am now, my lord—to do combat honourably before the eyes of my beloved King.

*Richard:* You are as brave as you are noble, Mowbray. *(To the Marshal)* Now, let the trial begin.

*(Two Heralds present the combatants with lances and then leave.)*

*Marshal:* Stand ready, combatants! *(Calls)* Sound the trumpets!

*(Trumpets. The two combatants poise to attack. Then the King rises and throws a baton to the ground.)*

*Richard:* Stop! Trumpets! Stand down!

*(Trumpets.)*

*Marshal (To the Combatants):* Stop! No combat! Weapons down!

*(The Combatants drop their lances.)*

*Richard (Nervously):* Honour has been satisfied on both sides. I will confer. *(He gestures to Gaunt and the other Lords. They huddle and confer inaudibly. Then the King speaks with some hesitation.)* It is my wish that neither man should die.—I would find it painful—and there would be—bad feelings—among many people.—For the same reason, I cannot allow these gentlemen to remain in England.—Their feud might result in—civil unrest.—Therefore—the only wise course of action—is to banish both of them—and forbid them to have any contact with each other. *(To Bolingbroke)* My cousin Duke of Hereford, you are banished from England for ten years. *(To Mowbray)* Duke of Norfolk, you are banished for life.

*Mowbray:* For life? Never to see England again? To live among strange people?

*Richard:* I'm sorry, but that's the way it is. *(To both of them)* Now—both of you. You must swear to me that you will never see each other again—neither to fight nor to reconcile. You will not meet for any purpose or make any plans against us.

*Bolingbroke:* I swear.

*Mowbray:* I swear.

*Bolingbroke:* Norfolk, one of us should have been dead right now. Before you leave, confess your guilt, and your exile will be easier to bear.

*Mowbray:* No. I won't. And as for you, I know what you are. And someday the King will know, too.

*(Mowbray leaves. Then Bolingbroke starts to leave, but Richard calls him back.)*

*Richard:* Cousin!—I don't want to be too harsh with you. I reduce your exile from ten years to six.

*Bolingbroke (With mock happiness):* Well! Four years done with in the blink of an eye!

*Gaunt (To Richard):* My lord, thank you for your consideration to my son. But six years or ten, it hardly matters to me. I won't live long enough to see him again.

*Richard:* Oh, come now, uncle. You still have many years to live.



*Gaunt:* Not without my son.

*Richard:* I did confer with you. You did agree to his banishment.

*Gaunt:* I didn't want to show any partiality. But now I wish I had.

*Richard (To Bolingbroke):* Goodbye, cousin.

*(Richard leaves with the other Lords.)*

*Aumerle (To Bolingbroke):* Goodbye, cousin. Write to me and let me know what your intentions are.

*Marshal (To Bolingbroke):* I will escort you to a ship, my lord.

*Gaunt (To Bolingbroke):* What's the matter? You have nothing to say to your cousin?

*Bolingbroke:* What's to say? There goes six years of my life.

*Gaunt:* Pretend it's a long vacation. Pretend you banished the King, not the other way around. Pretend you're getting a much-needed change of scenery.

*Bolingbroke:* I'm not going to pretend anything. I'll be well aware at every moment where I am and why.

*Gaunt:* Come on, I'll walk with you.

*(Gaunt gestures to Aumerle to come along, and they all leave.)*

**Act 1, Scene 4.** *In the King's court. The King comes in with Bagot and Green from one side, having an inaudible conversation. They meet Aumerle coming in from the other side.*

*Richard (To Aumerle):* You've seen him off, have you?

*Aumerle:* I walked with him as far as the first highway.

*Richard:* So, was it a sad goodbye?

*Aumerle:* Not really. We just said goodbye. I just wanted to get it over with and see him go.

*Richard:* Yes. I'm glad to see him go, too. Bagot and Green and I could see him in the street, the way he was working the crowd. He was all chummy with the low-lifes—you know, getting right down with the plebeians. That's not the way a lord should behave. Lords should keep a certain distance between themselves and the commoners. *(Bagot and Green grunt in agreement.)* I'll tell you what I think. I think he was testing the crowd. He wants to know how popular he is—for the future—eh? Know what I mean?

*Aumerle:* To be King someday, you mean.

*Richard:* Exactly.

*Green:* Well, he's out of our hair for six years, at least. And that's good because we have those damned Irish rebels to deal with.

*Richard:* Quite so. And I intend to take the army and go deal with them myself.

*Bagot:* You'll need money.

*Richard:* Hell, I always need money. I've got a thousand people in the household, you know. So, where do you think I could get money?

*Bagot:* Ohh—

*Richard:* I'll soak the rich. I'll lease out the crown lands to them. Make them pay now for a future benefit. I've got it all figured out. There's always money out there, Bagot. You just have to be willing to bend people's arms. And the King can do anything, you know. He's God's agent, right?

*(Bushy comes in, agitated.)*

*Richard:* Bushy, wassup?

*Bushy:* Your uncle John of Gaunt is very sick, my lord. He's at Ely House. I don't think he's going to live much longer.

*Richard (Happily):* What luck! *(Looking up)* And I didn't even have to pray!—Gaunt's loaded. When he kicks, we'll take everything he's got. *(With mock concern)* Shall we go see the sick man?

*Others:* Yes, yes.

*Richard:* With any luck, he'll be dead by the time we get there.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 2, Scene 1.** *Ely House in London. The ailing John of Gaunt comes in with his brother the Duke of York, the Earl of Northumberland, and Attendants.*

*Gaunt:* Is the King coming? There are a few things I'd like to say to him.

*York:* He won't listen.

*Gaunt:* Perhaps now that I'm dying, my words will make some impression on him.

*York:* He only listens to those who flatter him.

*Gaunt:* He's headed for disaster, and he's going to drag the whole country down with him.—My beloved England. A gem in the ocean. The whole world cares about England. Every square foot of it is blessed—even where blood has been shed. Walk anywhere in England and you'll find history, York. You'll find triumph—courage—inspiration.—I love this country so.

*York:* So do I.

*Gaunt:* And Richard has sold it out. Leasing out the kingdom to support his out-of-control spending. It's a disgrace.—I don't mind dying. I believe in heaven. What I mind is seeing what's happened to this country.

*(Richard comes in with the Queen, Aumerle, Bushy, Bagot, Green, Ross, and Willoughby.)*

*York (Discreetly to John):* Don't get into an argument with him.

*Queen:* Lancaster, dear uncle, how are you feeling?

*Richard:* How's it going, Gaunt, old chap?

*Gaunt:* Gaunt, indeed. Gaunt from fasting and from grief. Just throw my bones in the grave.

*Richard:* Well, at least you haven't lost your wit.

*Gaunt:* No, I haven't. I have wits enough to know who's really dying. You are, Richard.

*Richard:* Me?—Ha, ha!—I'm perfectly well.

*Gaunt:* No, you're not. Your reputation is dead from the way you've ruined this country. But you're too blind to see it. What are you, a king or a landlord? My father—your grandfather—King Edward—is turning over in his grave.

*Richard:* You've lost your mind, uncle. Your sickness has gone to your head. And if you weren't my uncle, I'd separate that head from the sick body it's stuck on.

*Gaunt:* Yes, you're quite good at killing uncles, aren't you?

*Richard:* What!

*Gaunt:* Thomas Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. You think we don't know? We know. And your shame will follow you to your grave and then stand over it forever to mark the spot. You won't need a headstone at all.

*(Gaunt leaves, supported by Northumberland and Attendants.)*

*Richard (Calling after him):* Damn you, Gaunt! Die, and good riddance!—I swear, what a bloody lot of nerve that guy's got.

*York:* He didn't really mean it, my lord. He's sick. He's not himself. Really, he does love you—just as much as Hereford does.

*Richard (Ironically):* Oh, I'm sure of that! Well, then, hunky dory. We're one big, happy family.

*(Northumberland returns.)*

*Northumberland:* He's dead.

*York:* My poor brother!—I'll be next.

*Richard:* Poor, my ass. He was loaded. And he'll be paying for our Irish war even when he's six feet under.

*(York turns away to hide his resentment. [Shakespeare doesn't give any stage direction here, and neither the Signet nor Folger editions provide any guidance, but it is clear that York's following speech is meant to be spoken aside.])*

*York (Aside):* How much do I have to put up with?—Gloucester's murder—Hereford sent into exile—angry citizens.—Ah, Richard—your father was my brother, and you look just like him, but you're not like him at all. Edward was a gentleman. He was honourable—true—loyal—and never stained by one single drop of guilty blood. But you, Richard—

*Richard:* What are you brooding about, uncle? Is something bothering you?

*York:* Yes, my lord, there is. Do you really intend to seize Gaunt's property? Because, rightfully, it still belongs to Henry Bolingbroke, even if he is in exile. If you seize it, a lot of good people will turn against you.

*Richard:* Nonsense. It's my royal prerogative. If I want to take it, I'll take it.

*York:* Then I'll take my leave for the time being, if you don't mind. I don't know how this is going to play out for you, but I don't want to be around to see it. Goodbye.

*(York leaves.)*

*Richard:* A bit thin-skinned, isn't he?—Never mind.—Bushy, I want you to go to the Earl of Wiltshire. He's the treasurer. Have him come here and take care of this business. Tomorrow I want to be on the march to Ireland. While I'm gone, I'll designate York as Lord Governor of England. I know I can trust him.—Come, my Queen.

*(The King and Queen leave with Aumerle, Bushy, Bagot, and Green, but Ross tugs Willoughby discreetly on the sleeve as a signal to stay. Ross, Willoughby, and Northumberland are left onstage.)*

*Ross:* Well, we have a new Duke of Lancaster, don't we?

*Willoughby:* In exile—and with no lands or money to go with the title.

*Northumberland:* It's unfair—totally unfair.

*Ross:* If there were some way—*(He stops himself.)*

*Northumberland:* Go ahead, Ross. Say what you want to say. We're all friends here.

*Willoughby:* He means—if there were some way to help Henry Bolingbroke.

*Ross:* Yes, Willoughby. But what can we do?

*Northumberland:* Nobody's safe any more, except the King's friends who kiss his ass. We're not safe if somebody puts an idea in the King's head about us.

*Ross:* He's gone right off the deep end, you know. He's taxing people left and right. He's fining the nobles for one stupid thing or another. I think most people must hate him by now.

*Willoughby:* He doesn't know it. He lives in a bubble. He's God's agent, so he can do anything. Extorting money to maintain his overstuffed court—and now a war with the rebels in Ireland.

*Northumberland:* He used to just make deals with his enemies. That was cheaper.

*Ross:* I don't think he had enough money to pay for his court and the war both. So he just helped himself to Lancaster's estate.

*Northumberland:* He's a rotten King, lads. He's no good.

*Willoughby:* But like Ross says, what can we do?

*Northumberland (After a pause):* Relief may be closer than you think.

*Ross:* Oh?

*Willoughby:* Northumberland, do you know something we don't?

*Ross:* Come on, Northumberland, out with it.

*Northumberland:* Our friend Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford—and now Duke of Lancaster—is getting some help in exile.

*Ross:* From whom?

*Northumberland:* The Duke of Brittany—and others.

*Willoughby:* How do you know?

*Northumberland:* Let's just say I have my sources.

*Ross:* Go on. What else?

*Northumberland:* Young Henry has made some new friends—Rainold Lord Cobham, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Sir Thomas Erpingham, Ramston, Norberry, Waterton, Coint. The Duke of Brittany has furnished them with eight ships and three thousand men. They're already on their way. As soon as Richard is out of the country, they'll land on the north shore. And then we'll soon be rid of Richard forever.

*Ross and Willoughby:* Yes! Yes!

*Northumberland:* We'll go to Ravenspurgh and join up with them. What do you say?

*Ross:* I'm with you!

*Willoughby:* So am I!

*(They leave.)*

**Act 2, Scene 2.** *Windsor Castle. The Queen comes in with Bushy and Bagot.*

*Bushy:* What's the matter, madam? You promised the King you'd keep your spirits up while he was gone.

*Queen:* I told him what he wanted to hear. But I have a bad feeling something's going to happen. I don't know what, but I feel it.

*Bushy:* It's all in the mind, madam. If you allow gloomy thoughts into your mind, they only grow.

*Queen:* Of course, you're right, Bushy. But I just have this premonition.

*(Green comes in, looking upset.)*

*Green:* God save the Queen!—Gentlemen, has the King left for Ireland?

*Queen:* Yes. What's the matter, Green? You look upset.

*Green:* Madam—Bolingbroke has landed with an army at Ravenspurgh.

*Bushy and Bagot:* What!

*Queen:* Oh, God, I knew it!

*Green:* And to make things worse, a lot of lords have defected to him.

*Queen:* Who?

*Green:* Northumberland, his son, Ross, Beaumont, Willoughby, and their friends.

*Bushy:* They're traitors!

*Green:* And, madam, Northumberland's brother, the Earl of Worcester, resigned and took almost all the household with him.

*Queen:* My own Lord Steward? He's gone? With the servants?

*Green:* Yes. And the nobles, too.

*Queen:* Who's going to protect us? The King's taken the army.

*(York comes in, looking upset.)*

*Queen:* Uncle! Is there any hope for us?

*York (Flustered and uncertain):* Madam, I—I'm not sure.—The King left me in charge, but I don't know what to do. If I were a younger man, I'm sure I'd—I'd do something, but—I'm an old man, madam. I can't deal with this.

*(A Servant of York comes in.)*

*Servant (To York):* My lord, I looked for your son, but he's gone.

*York:* Oh, God, nobody's here when I need help. We can forget Parliament. They're probably on Bolingbroke's side.—Listen, go to Lady Gloucester and tell her I need a thousand pounds so I can raise some sort of an army.

*Servant:* My lord, Lady Gloucester died a little while ago.

*York:* Oh, no—What in God's name can I do?—All right, go home and collect all the armour you can find.

*Servant:* Yes, my lord.

*(The Servant leaves.)*

*York:* What am I supposed to do? The King is my nephew, and so is Bolingbroke. Am I supposed to take sides? *(To the Queen)* Madam, for your safety, I'll take you to my home. *(To the Lords)* Gentlemen, try to raise whatever forces you can and meet me at Berkeley Castle.—Come, madam.

*(York and the Queen leave.)*

*Bushy:* It's pointless. There's no way.

*Green:* Lads, we're on the wrong side of this affair. When Bolingbroke arrives, we're dead.

*Bagot:* The Parliament will welcome him with open arms. They hate Richard. They might even attack us.

*Green:* We have to get out of here. We can go to Bristow Castle. The Earl of Wiltshire is there.

*Bushy:* What about York? Maybe he can raise an army.

*Green:* I doubt it very much. Let's go to Bristow.

*Bagot:* Yes.

*Bushy:* All right.

*(They leave. [Author's note: In the original play, Bagot flees to Ireland, but this is inconsistent with later events.] )*

**Act 2, Scene 3.** *In Gloucestershire. Henry Bolingbroke comes in with Northumberland and Soldiers.*

*Bolingbroke:* How far are we from Berkeley Castle?

*Northumberland:* I'm not sure. I don't know this part of the country. With any luck, we ought to meet up with Ross and Willoughby. They were supposed to come with me to Ravenspurgh, but they changed their plans. They'll be happy to see you, I know that.

*(Harry Percy, Northumberland's son, comes in.)*

*Northumberland:* It's my son, Harry. My brother Worcester must have sent him.—Harry, what's the news from your uncle Worcester?

*Percy:* I thought he was with you.

*Northumberland:* You mean he's not with the Queen?

*Percy:* No. He quit and took the household with him.

*Northumberland:* Why?

*Percy:* Because you were denounced as a traitor. He went to Ravenspurgh to look for the Duke of Hereford, and he sent me to scout out Berkeley Castle and find out what the Duke of York had in the way of forces. York is still loyal to the King.

*Northumberland:* Harry, you've never met the Duke of Hereford, have you?

*Percy:* No.

*Northumberland:* This is the Duke of Hereford—and now the Duke of Lancaster (*Indicating Bolingbroke*).

*Percy (To Bolingbroke):* Your servant, sir. I'm on your side.

*(Bolingbroke shakes Percy's hand.)*

*Bolingbroke:* Thank you, Harry. I'm very encouraged to know I have so many friends. And now I'm your friend, too.

*Percy:* Thank you, my lord.

*Northumberland (To Percy):* How far are we from Berkeley, and how many men does York have?

*Percy:* You're practically there already. York has only about three hundred men, including Lord Berkeley and Lord Seymour.

*(Ross and Willoughby come in.)*

*Northumberland:* Here's Ross and Willoughby.

*Bolingbroke:* Welcome, lords. (*Humourously*) So, you're throwing in your lot with a bunch of traitors, are you?

*Ross:* King Richard would say so, but we don't care.

*Bolingbroke:* I have no treasury to pay you out of—at least not without my estate.

*Willoughby:* We're already paid enough just by standing here with you.

*(Berkeley comes in.)*

*Northumberland:* Lord Berkeley?

*Berkeley:* Yes. (*To Bolingbroke*) My lord of Hereford—

*Bolingbroke:* Lancaster. I'm now the Duke of Lancaster since the death of my father.

*Berkeley:* As you say, sir. No disrespect intended. The Duke of York wants to know why you have—how shall I put it?—

*(York comes in.)*

*York:* Invaded. That's the word.

*Bolingbroke:* Ah, my noble uncle. (*He kneels*) And regent of England in the absence of the King.

*York:* Oh, stand up. I don't care about formalities.

*(Bolingbroke rises.)*



*Bolingbroke:* I still owe respect to my uncle, regardless.

*York:* You mean, regardless of whether you're a traitor or not. You were banished by the King, and now here you are with an army, taking advantage of the King's absence. I have every right to be angry with you. If I were in my prime, I'd give you a proper thrashing.

*Bolingbroke:* Oh—uncle—what have I done wrong?

*York:* What have you done wrong? Nephew, we have trouble enough in England without you taking up arms against the King. You were banished. Do you understand? Banished!

*Bolingbroke:* I was Duke of Hereford when I was banished, but now I return as Duke of Lancaster to claim what is mine. My father was your brother, and now I look upon you as a father. Would you see me disinherited from my lands and denied my proper title? You have a son—Aumerle—my cousin. If you had died instead of my father, and the King had banished Aumerle and stolen his estate, my father would have helped him without any hesitation. Now what else am I supposed to do? How else am I supposed to recover my lands?

*Northumberland (To York):* He's right, you know. He's been treated horribly.

*Ross (To York):* You should take his side, my lord. What's right is right.

*Willoughby (To York):* The King's been bad to the wrong people.

*York:* I know he's been treated badly. I tried to talk to the King, believe me. But to take up arms like this—it's—it's rebellion. I'm the Lord Governor in the King's absence. How can I condone rebellion?

*Northumberland:* But he's only here to reclaim his lands—nothing else.

*York:* You gentlemen have put me in an impossible position. If I had a proper army to deal with you, I would do my duty and arrest all of you.—Unfortunately, I'm not able to do that.—Therefore, I have no choice but to remain neutral in this dispute. You can leave if you want, or you can stay in the castle overnight.

*Bolingbroke:* Thank you, uncle. That's quite fair. We'll accept your hospitality—for tonight. But we'd like you to join us when we go to Bristow Castle. That's where Bushy, Bagot, and Green are supposed to be hiding out. They're vermin, and I intend to get rid of them.

*York:* I—I don't know.—I don't really want to get mixed up in all this. At my age, what's the point?—Anyway, come along to the castle.

*(They all leave.)*

**Act 2, Scene 4.** *In Wales. The Earl of Salisbury comes in with a Welsh Captain.*

*Captain:* My Lord Salisbury, we've been waiting ten days without any word from the King. The men are getting very restless. They want to go home. And frankly, I don't see why we should stay any longer.

*Salisbury:* No. Please, Captain. You've got to stay. The King's counting on you.

*Captain:* I have to tell you, my lord, that the general belief among my men is that the King is dead. We've seen signs—withered trees, meteors falling from the sky, strange behaviour among the people.

*Salisbury:* Oh, come now. You Welsh are too superstitious.

*Captain:* No, I don't think we're any more superstitious than anyone else. But my men are spooked. I can't keep them here any longer or the discipline will break down completely. They're convinced the King is dead.

*Salisbury:* Captain, if you would just be patient a bit longer. Perhaps tomorrow we'll know something.

*Captain:* My lord, with all respect to you, we've reached the limit of our patience. We're going. I'm sorry.

*(He leaves.)*

*Salisbury:* Richard—this is the end.—A meteor falling from the sky.—That's you.

*(He leaves.)*

**Act 3, Scene 1.** *Before the castle at Bristow (Bristol). Bolingbroke comes in with York, Northumberland (and optionally other Lords and Soldiers), plus Bushy and Green as prisoners.*

*Bolingbroke:* Bushy and Green—you have misled the King and spoiled the happiness of his public life, as well as his private life. You turned him against me when I was his loyal subject and then plundered my estate and possessions. For these offenses, and many others too numerous to list, I condemn you to death.

*Bushy:* I'd rather die than see England fall into your hands.

*Green:* God will welcome me to heaven, and the devil will welcome you to hell.

*Bolingbroke:* Northumberland—*(He gestures with a hand across his throat. Northumberland takes the prisoners away. Then, to York)* Uncle, you have the Queen at your house?

*York:* Yes.

*Bolingbroke:* I want her treated nicely. Send her a letter reassuring her of my love.

*York:* I already have.

*Bolingbroke:* Fine.—All right, everyone. The only threat we have left to deal with is those Welshmen—that is, if they're still on Richard's side. After that, I think we can relax.

*(They all leave.)*

**Act 3, Scene 2.** *The coast of Wales, near Barkloughly Castle. King Richard comes in with Aumerle, the Bishop of Carlisle, Soldiers and Colours (flag-bearers).*

*Richard:* Are we near Barkloughly Castle?

*Aumerle:* Yes, my lord. Are you glad to be on dry land again? You were a bit seasick on the way.

*Richard:* Dry land—yes. And not just any dry land.—My kingdom—England.—I love it so. And as it comforts me, so may it discomfort my enemies. Let them break their bones on the rocks. Let them be stung by nettles and bitten by spiders and snakes. Let them sink into the bogs. This land loves me and hates my enemies. It must be so—isn't that right, Aumerle?

*Aumerle:* Yes, my lord.

*Richard:* What do you say, my lord Bishop of Carlisle?

*Carlisle:* My lord, it was God's will that made you King, and He will provide the means to defeat your enemies. But we must still help ourselves, otherwise we go against God's will.

*Aumerle:* I think what his Grace means is that we have allowed Bolingbroke to become too powerful. That was our mistake.

*Richard:* Cousin, Bolingbroke is like a criminal who works by night and fears the light of day because he will be exposed. Now the day has returned. I am the King, by God's will, and Bolingbroke must fall. And those who have taken his side will perish. God will send his avenging angels to destroy them.

*(Salisbury comes in.)*

*Richard:* Salisbury! Where's the army you promised me?

*Salisbury:* My lord, if you just could've gotten here one day sooner—

*Richard:* What's the matter? Are they gone?

*Salisbury:* They thought you were dead. They've gone over to Bolingbroke.

*Richard (Upset):* Bolingbroke!

*Aumerle:* Have courage, sir. After all, you're still King.

*Richard:* Yes—of course.—It's a minor setback. We'll still prevail. I still have York on my side. He'll have soldiers for us.—Oh!—Here's Sir Stephen Scroop.

*(Scroop comes in.)*

*Scroop:* My lord, I have news, but it's not good.

*Richard:* What's happened, Scroop? Have we lost already?

*Scroop:* It's a general rebellion, my lord. People everywhere are going over to Bolingbroke.

*Richard:* Where's Wiltshire? Where's Bagot, and Bushy, and Green?

*Scroop:* You can forget about them, sir.

*Richard:* Did they defect? Those traitors!

*Scroop:* No, sir. They're dead.

*Aumerle:* Dead? How?

*Scroop:* They were executed at Bristow by Bolingbroke.

*Aumerle:* What about my father? He could still save us.

*Richard (Grimly):* Forget it. We're finished. *(He removes his crown and regards it.)* A fool's cap. That's what this is.—For fools to wear and imagine that they are—powerful—invincible.—Gentlemen, you thought I was a King. I thought I was a King. But now I'm just another man— a man of no particular power—a man with the same weaknesses as everyone else.

*Carlisle:* Don't say that, my lord. Don't give in to despair. It only helps your enemies.

*Aumerle:* My father will help us. You'll see, my lord.

*Richard:* Yes.—Of course.—York's still out there.—Scroop, where is York with his army?

*Scroop (Hesitates):* My lord—York will not fight Bolingbroke. He's gone over to his side. He had no choice. He had no army to speak of. And all the castles in the north and all the lords in the south are with Bolingbroke, too.

*(Aumerle is stunned and embarrassed. Richard gives him a twisted smile.)*

*Richard:* Then it's over.—Don't anyone try to comfort me now. I'd only resent it. I'll go to Flint Castle—and just wait—for whatever happens.—Let the rest of our soldiers go home to their families and their fields.—Bolingbroke has won.

*(They all leave.)*

**Act 3, Scene 3.** *Before Flint Castle in Wales. Bolingbroke, York, and Northumberland come in with Soldiers (including Colours) and Attendants.*

*Bolingbroke:* So, the King doesn't have anyone except Salisbury and a few friends, is that it?

*Northumberland:* That's right, my lord. Everything's worked out perfectly for you. You didn't even have to fight. *(Indicates the castle)* Richard's holed up in there.

*York (Annoyed):* Richard? You're referring to the King.

*Northumberland:* Well—you know who I mean.

*York:* There was a time when if you'd referred to him by his first name, you'd have been taught a lesson in manners.

*Bolingbroke:* It's all right, uncle. Nobody means any disrespect.

*York:* I hope not, nephew. There's still a heaven and a King above us, and we should all know our place.

*(Harry Percy comes in.)*

*Percy (To Bolingbroke):* My lord, the King has locked himself in the castle.

*Bolingbroke:* Yes, I know. Who's with him?

*Percy:* Lord Aumerle, Lord Salisbury, Sir Stephen Scroop, and some clergyman—I'm not sure who.

*Northumberland:* Probably the Bishop of Carlisle.

*Bolingbroke:* Northumberland, take a trumpeter and get the King's attention. Tell him—tell him that his loving cousin Bolingbroke comes to reconcile and make peace with him—provided that my banishment is repealed and all my lands and property are restored to me.—Or else I will have to slaughter him and all his friends—which I certainly would prefer not to do. He'll be able to get a good look at my army.

*Northumberland:* Yes, my lord.

*[Author's note: This staging is very compressed—i.e., distance is implied. Northumberland goes to one end of the stage and looks up at the wall of the castle. He makes a signal behind him and a trumpet sounds offstage. A fainter trumpet replies from within the castle. Richard appears at the wall with Aumerle (and optionally Scroop, Carlisle, and Salisbury).]*

*Bolingbroke (To York):* There he is. Look at him. He knows he's finished.

*York:* He still looks like a King to me. *(A significant look to Bolingbroke)* I wouldn't want to see any harm come to him.

*Richard (To Northumberland):* What's the matter, Northumberland, you don't kneel to me any more? Or has God taken away my royal symbols? Certainly no mortal man could take them away, unless he were a usurper. Or perhaps you assume we are defenseless. God above is rousing his powers in my behalf and will strike dead those who oppose me. Tell Bolingbroke, the traitor, that before he should ever wear this crown, ten thousand men shall die.

*Northumberland:* No, no, my lord. Your cousin Henry Bolingbroke has no intention of stealing the crown. He loves you, as he loved your father and grandfather. He seeks only what is rightfully his, and he asks you humbly to repeal his banishment. Then he can send his soldiers home. You can believe that, my lord, and as a gentleman I assure you of his kind intentions.

*Richard:* All right. Tell him he's welcome here, and I'll grant his requests. Tell him that I, his cousin, send my love.

*Northumberland:* Thank you, my lord.

*(Northumberland returns and confers inaudibly with Bolingbroke.)*

*Richard (To Aumerle):* What do you think, Aumerle? Does it make me look weak to give in to him? Or should I defy him, and then we'll all die?

*Aumerle:* I would say temporize, my lord. Buy time until someone can rescue us.

*Richard:* Someone? Like who?

*Aumerle:* I don't know.

*Richard:* Oh, God—To think that I cast him out, and now I have to grovel to him. What a humiliation. But what choice do I have? None.

*(Northumberland returns to his previous position before the castle wall.)*

*Richard (Talking to himself and indirectly to Aumerle):* Do I have to give up the crown? All right. Let him have it. Let him have everything. I'll live like a peasant and live in a shack and eat from a wooden bowl. And when I die, just throw me into a peasant's grave. *(Aumerle starts to weep.)* Go ahead and cry, Aumerle. We'll both cry as we dig our own graves and then jump in and say, "Cover us up and forget us." We'll be remembered as the two cousins who dug their own graves.—Oh, hell, forget it. I don't know what I'm saying any more. I'm spouting gibberish. *(To Northumberland, below)* Well, Northumberland, what does King Bolingbroke have to say? Will he let me die of old age, or not?

*Northumberland:* My lord, would you please come down to the courtyard? He wants to speak to you.

*Richard:* Down to the courtyard. Indeed. Down I come. Down from the high place to the low place. Down, down, down comes the King.

*(Richard disappears from the wall.)*

*Bolingbroke:* What does he say?

*Northumberland:* He's coming down, sir. I think he's losing his mind.

*(Richard comes in below with his Attendants.)*

*Bolingbroke:* Everyone kneel to the King.

*(They all kneel.)*

*Bolingbroke:* My gracious lord.

*Richard:* Don't dirty your knees for my sake, cousin. I'd rather have your love than a bow.

*(Bolingbroke rises, then the others.)*

*Bolingbroke:* My lord, I am here only for what is rightfully mine.

*Richard:* What's yours is yours—and what's mine is yours.

*Bolingbroke:* No, no, my lord. I will still deserve your love when all is done.

*Richard:* The strong deserve to get what they want. *(To York, who is in tears)* Now, now, uncle, don't cry for me. There's no point. *(To Bolingbroke)* Cousin, you can have whatever you want. I'm in no position to refuse.—Are we going to London now?

*Bolingbroke:* Yes, my lord.

*Richard:* Yes—London—lovely town this time of year—jolly good.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 3, Scene 4.** *In the Duke of York's garden. The Queen comes in with her two Waiting-ladies.*

*Queen (Unenthusiastically):* What shall we do to amuse ourselves?

*First Lady:* We could play lawn bowling.

*Queen:* No. Lawn bowling makes me think of ruin and despair.

*Second Lady:* We could play nine men's morris.

*Queen:* No. It makes me think of the utter hopelessness of life—futility—agony—And I always lose.

*Both Ladies:* Oh, dear.

*Queen:* I see the gardeners coming. Let's hide and hear what they say. We may find out something.

*(The Queen and her Ladies step into a place of concealment. A Gardener and his Helper come in.)*

*Gardener (To his Helper):* I want you to pull out all the weeds. There's too many damn weeds in this garden. They suck all the nutrients out of the soil and leave the pretty flowers hungry for nourishment.

*Helper:* What's the point of keeping this garden neat when the rest of the country is choking with weeds?—not to mention disgusting caterpillars—the kind I like to squash under my shoe and pretend it's somebody I hate.

*Gardener:* Never mind. The one who is the root cause of all the disorder has been plucked out—by Henry Bolingbroke. And we'll have no more filthy caterpillars like Bushy, Green, and the Earl of Wiltshire.

*Helper:* Oh? Are they dead?

*Gardener:* Yes. And Bolingbroke has captured King Richard. If he'd been as good a King as we are gardeners, this land would be fruitful and happy. But he was a lousy King, and look what's become of him.

*Helper:* So he's been overthrown, then?

*Gardener:* If he isn't by now, he soon will be. The Duke of York's friend received a letter about the King's capture.

*(The Queen jumps out of hiding.)*

*Queen:* What do you mean by this! How dare you tell such lies about the King!

*Gardener:* I'm sorry, madam. I didn't know you were there. But what I said is true. The King's been captured by Bolingbroke, and all the lords are on Bolingbroke's side. It's common knowledge by now. If you go to London, you'll find out for yourself.

*Queen:* No!—No!—*(To her Ladies)* Come, ladies! We must go to London! *(To the Gardeners)* I hope all your plants die!

*(The Queen and her Ladies leave.)*

*Gardener:* Poor Queen. I don't blame her for being upset. Let's plant some bitter herbs to remember her by.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 4, Scene 1.** *Parliament in Westminster Hall. A bench along the backstage suggests Parliament. Bolingbroke comes in with Aumerle, Northumberland, Harry Percy, Lords Fitzwater and Surrey, the Bishop of Carlisle, the Abbot of Westminster, and other Lords and Attendants.*

*Bolingbroke:* Call Bagot.

*(Officers come in with Bagot.)*

*Bolingbroke:* Now, then, Bagot, tell us what you know about Gloucester's death. Who persuaded the King to do it, and who actually did it?

*Bagot:* It was Aumerle.

*Bolingbroke (To Aumerle):* Cousin, you'd better stand right here and face your accuser.

*(Aumerle faces Bagot.)*

*Bagot:* Aumerle, I heard you brag that you killed Gloucester in Calais, where he was in prison. And I also heard you say you'd sooner turn down a hundred thousand crowns than see Bolingbroke return to England, and how we'd be better off if he were dead.

*Aumerle:* Lies! Slander! I won't take that from you! *(He throws down his glove.)* There! I challenge you, Bagot, you liar!

*Bolingbroke (Cautioning Bagot):* Don't pick it up.

*Fitzwater (To Aumerle):* Bagot is below your rank, but I'm not. *(He throws down his glove.)* I heard you brag about Gloucester's death. And if you deny it, you'll face my sword.

*Aumerle (Picking up Fitzwater's glove):* And you'll face mine, Fitzwater, you coward.

*Fitzwater:* I'm ready to fight you right here, right now!

*Aumerle:* You'll rot in hell for your lies!

*Percy:* No, you're the liar, Aumerle! Fitzwater is telling the truth! *(He throws down his glove.)* There! I dare you to pick it up!

*Aumerle (Picking it up):* With pleasure! And more pleasure to come when I stick my sword in your guts!

*Another Lord (Throwing down his glove):* I never did like you, Aumerle! I'll fight you, too!

*Aumerle (Picking up the glove):* Why not? I don't care! I'll fight a thousand of you if I have to!

*Surrey:* Fitzwater, I remember when you and Aumerle were talking about Gloucester.



*Fitzwater:* That's right. You were there. *(To the Others)* Surrey will back me up.

*Surrey:* No, I'm not backing you up. What you said about Aumerle isn't true.

*Fitzwater:* Surrey, you lying bastard!

*Surrey:* You're the liar, and I'll fight you to prove it. *(He throws down his glove.)* Pick that up if you dare.

*Fitzwater (Picking up the glove):* You'll get the point of my sword in your black heart, Surrey! *(He throws down his own glove.)* There! I say Aumerle is guilty. *(To Aumerle)* Mowbray told me.

Mowbray said you sent two of your men to Calais to murder Gloucester.

*Aumerle (Searching himself for another glove):* Fuck—I'm out of gloves.—Somebody lend me a fucking glove. *(A shower of gloves comes out from both wings. He picks one up and throws it down before Fitzwater.)* There! That says Mowbray is a liar! And if he ever comes back from exile, he can face me in a duel!

*Bolingbroke:* All right, enough! Everybody stop. All these quarrels will have to wait. I'm going to repeal Mowbray's banishment. Then we'll settle things between him and Aumerle.

*Carlisle:* My lord, I'm afraid that won't be possible. Sir Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, was killed fighting in the Crusade.

*Bolingbroke:* What? Norfolk is dead?

*Carlisle:* Yes.

*Bolingbroke:* God rest his soul.—As for the rest of you, we'll deal with your quarrels later.

*(The Duke of York comes in.)*

*York:* Good nephew, Duke of Lancaster.

*Bolingbroke:* Duke of York, beloved uncle.

*York:* King Richard has made you his heir and has relinquished the throne to you. You are now King Henry, and God save you, sir.

*Bolingbroke:* In God's name, I accept.

*Carlisle:* No!—This is wrong. No man can remove the King from his throne. The King is God's agent. He is God's anointed ruler. If you overthrow the King, then no King shall ever be safe. And the country will forever be at risk of civil war. This is—mutiny! It's treason!

*Northumberland:* The treason is yours, Carlisle. You're under arrest. *(To the Abbot of Westminster)* My lord of Westminster, you'll take custody of him. *(To the Others)* I believe Parliament is agreed to this change of regime.

*(Vague grunts of agreement in the background.)*

*Bolingbroke:* Yes. Let's do this openly right here in Parliament so no one can accuse us of anything later. Bring Richard here.

*York:* I'll get him.

*(York leaves.)*

*Bolingbroke:* Those of you who intend to duel must find someone to guarantee that you'll be there at the appointed time and place. I have no intention of intervening in anyone's behalf.

*(York returns with Richard and two or three Officers.)*

*Richard (To York, and indirectly to the Others):* It pains me to be sent for when I was the one who sent for others. All these men used to bow to me and say "God save the King". Who shows me that respect now? No one.—What do they want of me, York?

*York:* They want to, you know, make it official—to give up the crown—which you agreed to.

*(Richard removes his crown and holds it out to Bolingbroke. But when Bolingbroke puts his hand on it, Richard does not let go. They are frozen in this pose, looking at each other.)*

*Richard (Gravely):* How can I?—But I must.—Give up my crown, my lands, my sacred position—my very being.—Let those who broke their oaths to me be forgiven, and may all oaths to the new King be unbroken. *(He lets go of the crown.)* And may you sit long on the throne where I used to sit. Long life to King Henry. *(Looking around)* Is there anything else?

*Northumberland:* Only that you must confess your crimes and those of your followers so that the people will have no doubt that you have been deposed for good reason. *(Northumberland holds out a paper, which Richard does not take.)* It's all written down. You must read it aloud.

*Richard:* Oh, read it aloud, must I? How would you like to have someone hand you a record of your sins and tell you to read them aloud? Would you confess to breaking your oaths and deposing your King? *(To the Others)* You're a fine lot of lords—all of you. Some of you look almost sympathetic, but you're willing to go along with this anyway. Like Pontius Pilate, you wash your hands of it and send me off to die on my cross. But you will be remembered the same way he is remembered.

*Northumberland:* Please, my lord, just read these articles.

*Richard:* I have no eyes for your damned articles! All I can see are traitors!—And I, too, must be a traitor, because I agreed to this treason.

*Northumberland:* My lord—

*Richard:* I'm not your lord any more! I am no man's lord any more!—I am nothing. I am like a man of snow melting before the bright sun of Bolingbroke. Is there anything left of me?—Bring me a mirror. I want to see.

*Bolingbroke (To an Attendant):* Go fetch a mirror.

*(The Attendant leaves.)*

*Northumberland:* You must read this paper—

*Richard:* Oh, damn your paper!

*Bolingbroke:* It's okay, Northumberland. Forget it.

*Northumberland:* But the Parliament must hear him read it.

*Richard:* Read! Read! Read!—What is there to read?—Only myself.

*(The Attendant returns and gives Richard the mirror. He looks into it.)*

*Richard:* Is this me? Where is the sorrow? Where are the wounds? They should be written all over this face.—The mirror lies. It shows me as I was—a King feared and obeyed by all—not as I am—a mere mortal whose heart is broken. *(He throws the mirror down, breaking it.)* Sorrow has destroyed this face.

*Bolingbroke (Condescendingly):* But it's just the appearance of your sorrow, and the reflection of your face.

*Richard:* Eh? The appearance of my sorrow? Yes, of course. The appearance is what can be seen. But the real sorrow is unseen, buried in the tortured soul. And there it is not just an appearance but something of substance.—Thank you, King Henry. You not only give me cause for grief but teach me to find the cause within myself.—Now do me one last favour, won't you?

*Bolingbroke:* Of course, fair cousin.

*Richard:* Fair cousin! Well! Now a King flatters me. Surely I can have whatever I want.

*Bolingbroke:* Yes, you can.

*Richard:* Just let me go away.

*Bolingbroke:* Where?

*Richard:* Wherever you'd like me to go, to be out of your sight.

*Bolingbroke (To the Officers):* Take him away to the Tower.

*Richard:* Take me away! Splendid! Take me away like a bundle of stolen goods, and hide me in the Tower!

*(Richard is escorted out by the Officers.)*

*Bolingbroke:* Next Wednesday we'll hold the coronation. You'll all be there.

*(They all leave, except Westminster, Carlisle, and Aumerle, who linger.)*

*Westminster:* Well, that was an ugly show if ever I saw one.

*Carlisle:* The worst is yet to come. Historians will write about this as one of England's darkest days.

*Aumerle:* Isn't there anything we can do?

*Westminster:* Yes, there is. But I will swear you to secrecy about my plans. Come to my house for supper, and I'll tell you what I have in mind.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 5, Scene 1.** *A London street. The Queen comes in with her two Ladies.*

*Queen:* This is the way he'll come—to the Tower. We'll wait. This may be the last time I ever see him alive.

*(One of the Ladies points.)*

*Lady:* Madam.

*Queen:* Oh!—My husband.

*(Richard comes in with his escort.)*

*Richard:* Don't cry for me, my dear. Pretend you only dreamed we were King and Queen. I'll go to the Tower to meet my fate. And you should return to France and live in a convent. Perhaps if you pray hard enough, my sins will be forgiven.

*Queen:* You talk like a beaten man. What has Bolingbroke done to you—cut out your heart? My King was always a man of courage—a lion—the king of beasts.

*Richard:* Beasts, indeed. That's what they are. Now, my good Queen, return to France and consider me dead. And when others tell you their tales of woe, you can tell them yours—how a rightful King was wrongfully overthrown.

*(Northumberland comes in.)*

*Northumberland:* My lord, there has been a change of plans. You will not go to the Tower after all. Bolingbroke is sending you to Pomfret Castle in Yorkshire. *(To the Queen)* And, madam, arrangements have been made to send you to France at once.

*Richard:* You're pretty happy with yourself now, aren't you, Northumberland? You and Bolingbroke—buddy, buddy, eh? Well, it won't last. That's my prediction. You'll start to think you haven't been rewarded enough for all you've done for him. And then he's going to worry that if you could help him overthrow me, you could just as easily help someone else overthrow him. If you trust the love of a wicked man, you'll end up dead.

*Northumberland:* Never mind about that. I can take care of myself. Now just say your goodbyes so we can get going.

*Richard (Embracing the Queen):* This is goodbye, my dear.

*Queen:* No! Don't leave me! *(To Northumberland)* Why can't he come to France with me?

*Northumberland:* It's not up to me, madam.

*Richard:* It's all right, my dear. Even though we're far apart, our hearts will still be joined.

*Queen (Clinging to him):* No–no–no–

*Richard:* My dear, the longer we drag this out, the worse it is. Now gather up your sorrow and wrap it up tightly and put it away, and stand tall like a brave Queen.

*(A final kiss, then they all leave.)*

**Act 5, Scene 2.** *The Duke of York's house. The Duke and Duchess come in.*

*York:* It was terrible–terrible. People were throwing dirt and garbage from the windows on Richard as he was being led through the streets. And there was Bolingbroke on his horse–Richard's horse, mind you!–and everyone was shouting “Hurray for Bolingbroke! God save Bolingbroke!” And he waved back and said, “Thank you, countrymen!” And there was Richard walking proudly, holding back his tears. Any other man would have crumbled into dust from such humiliation.

*Duchess:* The poor man!

*York:* But heaven has a hand in all human affairs. We have to recognize that. Henry Bolingbroke is our King now–God's agent–and we must be loyal to him.

*(Aumerle comes in.)*

*Duchess:* Aumerle, my son.

*York:* No longer Duke of Aumerle. He's been stripped of that title. Now he's just the Earl of Rutland. And I have had to guarantee his loyalty personally.

*Duchess:* Oh, well–a new King must bring some changes, I suppose.–And who are the favourites of the court now?

*Aumerle:* I don't know and I don't care.

*York:* Well, just you be on your best behaviour with the new King. What's happening at Oxford?

*Aumerle (Startled reaction):* Oxford?

*York:* You know–the celebrations–the tournaments.

*Aumerle (Relieved):* Oh–that.–I suppose they're going ahead as planned.

*York:* I expect you'll be there.

*Aumerle:* Oh, yes, I'll be there.

*(York notices a letter inside Aumerle's shirt.)*

*York:* What's that letter sticking out of your shirt?

*Aumerle (Trying to hide it):* Nothing. It's nothing.

*York:* If it's nothing, why are you trying to hide it?

*Aumerle:* It's private. That's all.

*York:* I want to read it. Give it to me.

*Aumerle:* No, no. Please.

*York:* If I don't read it, I'm going to worry about it.

*Duchess:* What's there to worry about? It's probably just gossip between young men.

*York:* I want to see it anyway.

*Aumerle:* NO—don't—

*(York snatches the letter and reads it.)*

*York:* My God! This is treason!

*Duchess:* What's the matter?

*York:* What's the matter? It's a bloody disaster, that's what's the matter! I've got to stop this!

*(Calling)* Saddle my horse!—My God, I have to see the King at once!

*Duchess:* What is it? What's wrong?

*York:* Don't ask. *(Calling)* Bring my boots!

*Duchess:* Aumerle, what's this all about?

*Aumerle:* I don't want to tell you. I'm sorry.

*(A Servant comes in with the boots. York puts them on.)*

*York:* It's a good thing I saw this—otherwise—*(To Aumerle)* You traitor! How can you be my son?

*Duchess:* I'm his mother, and I demand to know what this is all about!

*York:* It's a plot against the King, and he's in on it!

*Duchess (Stricken):* Ohh!—*(To York)* Don't go! He'll be executed!

*York:* Don't go? A dozen traitors are plotting to kill the King at Oxford! What do you expect me to do, keep quiet about it?

*Duchess:* He won't go to Oxford! He'll stay here!

*York:* I won't have a traitor for a son!

*Duchess:* He's my only son! You can't betray him!

*York:* I can't help it! I have to go!

*(York leaves.)*

*Duchess:* Aumerle, you must get to the King before your father does. That's your only chance. Beg the King to forgive you. Tell him it was a mistake. You didn't mean it. You didn't understand what it

was about. Get on your horse and go as fast as you can. I'll follow you. I'll beg the King myself if I have to.—Go!

*(They leave.)*

**Act 5, Scene 3.** *Windsor Castle. Bolingbroke is now King Henry. He comes in with Lords, including Harry Percy. [Author's note: Following the example of the Folger edition, from this point on, Bolingbroke is designated by the speech prefix King Henry.]*

*King Henry:* Where the hell is Prince Hal, that no-good son of mine? I haven't seen him for three months. He's probably with those juvenile delinquent friends of his, hanging around in bars and getting into trouble.

*Percy:* I saw him two days ago, my lord. I told him about the games we're having at Oxford.

*King Henry:* Oh, did you? And what did he say?

*Percy:* He said he was going to go to a whorehouse and steal a glove from some whore and wear it as a good luck charm in the games.

*King Henry:* Ach!—The kid's a degenerate. He's undisciplined, arrogant, impulsive, and he's addicted to vice. Still, I have hopes that he'll be a good King someday.

*(Aumerle rushes in, out of breath.)*

*Aumerle:* I must speak to the King!

*King Henry:* Whoa! Take it easy, cousin. What's the matter?

*Aumerle:* God save your Majesty. I must speak to you privately.

*King Henry:* All right, if you insist. *(He nods to the others to leave, which they do.)* Now, what's on your mind?

*(Aumerle kneels before him.)*

*Aumerle:* You must pardon me! You must forgive me! You must, you must, you must! I won't get up until you do!

*King Henry:* What the hell? Is this something you've already done or only intended to do?

*Aumerle:* Not done, my lord. Only intended—stupidly. I'm sorry.

*King Henry:* Oh, well, then, no harm done, is there? I forgive you. Now what is it?

*Aumerle:* I must lock the door before I can tell you.

*King Henry:* Whatever.

*(Aumerle locks the door. At that moment, York bangs on the door and calls.)*

*York (Within):* Watch out, my lord! He's a traitor!

*King Henry:* What! A traitor? *(He reaches for his sword.)*

*Aumerle:* No! No! I'm not here to do any harm!

*York (Banging on the door):* Let me in, your Majesty! For your own sake!

*(King Henry opens the door and admits York, then relocks the door.)*

*King Henry:* Uncle! What's the matter?

*York:* You'd better read this.

*(York hands the King the letter.)*

*Aumerle:* I'm sorry, my lord! I'm not part of it any more! I'm through with them! You promised to forgive me!

*York:* Ha! You're sorry now, aren't you, boy?—Don't forgive him, your Majesty. He's a traitor.

*King Henry (Reading the letter):* This is very bad. Very bad.—Uncle, you are loyal, and I love you for it. And since your son obviously regrets his mistake, I will forgive him.

*York:* But I can't forgive him. He has disgraced me. For the sake of my honour, you must put him to death.

*Aumerle:* Dad!

*(The Duchess bangs on the door.)*

*Duchess (Within):* Your Majesty, let me in!

*King Henry:* Who's banging out there?

*Duchess (Within):* Your dear auntie, the Duchess of York! Please let me in!

*King Henry:* What the—*(To Aumerle)* Let your mother in.

*(Aumerle opens the door for his mother.)*

*York:* If you just pardon anyone who asks for pardon, God knows where it'll lead. You have to know when to punish people, too.

*Duchess:* Don't listen to him, your Majesty. He's a cold-hearted man.

*York:* What are you doing here? Come to plead for your miserable son?

*Duchess:* Quiet, husband! *(To King Henry)* Now, your Majesty, good nephew.

*(She kneels.)*

*King Henry:* Please, auntie, you're embarrassing me.

*Duchess:* I'm not getting up until you forgive him.

*(Aumerle kneels beside her.)*



*Aumerle:* For my mother, my lord, and for me. Please forgive me.

*(York kneels.)*

*York:* No! No! No! You can't forgive such treason!

*(The Duchess slaps York.)*

*Duchess:* Oh! You would have your own son executed, you monster?—Don't listen to him, your Majesty. It's two against one here—my son and I.

*King Henry:* Yes, yes, yes. Now please get up, auntie.

*Duchess:* I have to hear you say it with my own ears that you forgive him.

*York:* Tell her no.

*Duchess:* Say yes!

*King Henry:* Yes. Yes. Yes. He's forgiven. All right?

*Duchess:* Oh, thank you!

*(The Duchess, Aumerle, and York rise.)*

*King Henry:* But everybody else in this plot is going to get it.—Uncle, I leave it to you to send some men to Oxford to round them up.—Cousin, your mother has saved your life.

*Aumerle:* Thank you, my lord.

*Duchess (To Aumerle):* Come along, son. And from now on you'll have nothing to do with radicals and anarchists.

*(They all leave.)*

**Act 5, Scene 4.** *In Windsor Castle. Sir Pierce Exton comes in with his Servant.*

*Exton:* Did you hear what the King said? He said, "If only I had a friend who would rid me of this living fear?"

*Servant:* Yes, sir, that's exactly what he said.

*Exton:* "If only I had a friend." He said it twice.

*Servant:* That he did, sir.

*Exton:* And he was looking straight at me when he said it. Did you notice?

*Servant:* Yes, sir, I did notice that.

*Exton:* And who or what do you suppose is the living fear that he would like to be rid of?

*Servant:* I hesitate to say, sir.

*Exton:* It can only be Richard—locked up in Pomfret Castle. King Henry wants me to go to Pomfret and—do him that little favour. Isn't that so?

*Servant:* Mm—apparently, sir.

*Exton:* It's obvious. And I'm sure he'll reward me handsomely.—Yes. Of course, he will. He's good to his friends.

*Servant:* Yes, sir.

*Exton:* Come on. We're going to Pomfret.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 5, Scene 5.** *In Pomfret Castle, which is a prison. Richard comes in alone. He paces back and forth slowly, mumbling and gesturing to himself, studying the walls, touching them. A distant chime like a church bell is heard. He stops to listen, counting the chimes.*

*Richard:* I wasted time.—Now time wastes me.—I can mark the time—but it's really time that is marking me.—And when I am become nothing—time will still be here—ticking away.

*(A Groom of the stable comes in.)*

*Groom:* Hail, good King!

*Richard:* King?—Ha!—But thank you anyway. Who are you?

*Groom:* I was a groom in your stable, my lord. I looked after your favourite horse, Barbary.

*Richard:* Oh, ho! Did you, now?

*Groom:* Yes, my lord. I took good care of him. Made sure he always looked his best. And a few times I was able to watch your Majesty ride him. It made me so proud.—Now Bolingbroke rides Barbary. It makes me sad.

*Richard:* And he's able to? Doesn't the horse throw him off?

*Groom:* No, my lord. The horse is perfectly well-behaved with him.

*Richard:* Ah, well, the horse doesn't know a villain, I suppose.

*(The Keeper comes in with food for Richard.)*

*Keeper (To the Groom):* You be gone now. No visitors allowed.

*Groom:* Yes, yes.

*(The Groom bows to Richard and leaves.)*

*Keeper:* Your food, my lord. You must be hungry.

*Richard:* You taste it first, just so I know it isn't poisoned.

*Keeper:* Oh—I would, sir. However, Sir Pierce of Exton said not to. He just came from King Henry.

*Richard:* To hell with King Henry, and to hell with Exton—and you, too!

*(He strikes the Keeper.)*

*Keeper:* Oh! Help! Help!

*(Exton rushes in with a half dozen or so men armed with knives or similar weapons. They attack Richard.)*

*Richard:* Murderers! Damn you!

*(Richard seizes a weapon from one man and kills two or three of them.)*

*Richard:* Rot in hell!—And you, too!—Bastard!—Exton! My blood will be on Henry!

*(Exton stabs him. Richard dies. There is a painful moment while Exton regards what he has done. The suggestion to the audience is that Exton is highly conflicted.)*

*Exton (To his Men):* Take these men and bury them. I'll take Richard's body to King Henry.

*(They leave with the bodies.)*

**Act 5, Scene 6.** *Windsor Castle. A trumpet flourish. King Henry comes in with the Duke of York and other Lords and Attendants.*

*King Henry:* Uncle, I've heard that rebels are setting fire to towns in Gloucestershire, but I don't know if they've been captured yet.—Ah, here's Northumberland.

*(Northumberland comes in.)*

*King Henry:* What news, sir?

*Northumberland:* Lords Salisbury, Spencer, Blunt, and Kent have been executed. Their heads have been sent to London.

*King Henry:* Well done. You'll get a reward for this.

*(Fitzwater comes in.)*

*King Henry:* What news, Fitzwater?

*Fitzwater:* We caught two more—Brocas and Seely. They've been executed. Their heads have been sent to London.

*King Henry:* Excellent. I'll reward you for this.

*(Harry Percy comes in with the Bishop of Carlisle as a prisoner.)*

*King Henry:* Harry Percy! Well, well—and the Bishop of Carlisle.

*Percy:* My lord, the ringleader of the pack, the Abbot of Westminster, is dead. I brought Carlisle back alive.

*(King Henry takes his time considering Carlisle.)*

*King Henry:* Carlisle, even though you never liked me, I don't see you as the same sort of villain as the others. Find yourself some little religious retreat far away from here and go live a quiet life.

*Carlisle:* Thank you, sir.

*(Exton comes in with Attendants bearing Richard's coffin. King Henry is shocked.)*

*Exton:* Your Majesty, I did what you wanted me to do.—Your enemy—Richard.

*King Henry:* What! I never told you to kill him!

*Exton:* But you did, sir. You looked right at me and said, "If only I had a friend who would rid me of this living fear."

*King Henry:* But you misunderstood!—I didn't mean literally—I mean, I may have wished he was dead, but—Exton, you've done me a lot of harm with this. Let this death be on your conscience. Now get out of my sight. I never want to see you again.

*(Exton leaves. King Henry rubs his hands unconsciously, symbolizing washing blood from the hands.)*

*King Henry:* My lords—I'm sure you all share my grief over Richard's death. We will observe a proper period of mourning out of respect for him.—As for me, I must do something to atone for this terrible deed—for I do feel stained with Richard's blood. I will lead a Crusade to the Holy Lands in the service of God and the Saviour.—Now let us go to the chapel and pray.

*(They all leave, but the coffin remains. [Author's note: In the original play, they carry the coffin out, and the play ends.] After a moment, the figure of Death walks slowly out from the side and helps Richard out of the coffin. He is shrouded and ghost-like. He comes to the front of the stage and delivers the following epilogue, while Death stands slightly behind and to the side.)*

*Richard:* England—

Behold the cycles of thy seasons—

Murder, victory, guilt, and treason,

Place thine ear to the hollow crown

And hear within the sounds of grief and rage,

The storms of pride and temper

That send rains of steel upon the troubled land.

Put sword in hand,

Let flesh kill flesh and leave the end to Fate,

For wisdom never comes, or comes too late.

Call the King villain, agent of God, or any other term—

It's all the same, for we're all food for worms.

The pomp and ceremony and all pretense

Shall crumble like old monuments,

And where the cycle ends, no man can say—

The stain of blood is hard to wash away.

*(Death leads Richard offstage slowly.)*

**END**

Posted on July 7, 2011 by Crad Kilodney, Toronto, Canada.

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